UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/760
S/1996/1060.
19 December 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Agenda item 21 (b)
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OR REGIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 19 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the decision taken on 15 November 1996 by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation concerning the position of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on the use of Security Council sanctions.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 21 (b), and also of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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ANNEX

Decision taken on 15 November 1996 by the State Duma concerning the position of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on the use of Security Council sanctions

At the current time, the United Nations Security Council is once again considering the question of the imposition of sanctions, this time against the Sudan.

Unconditionally condemning all manifestations of terrorism, the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation considers that all cases of international terrorism must be carefully investigated and the perpetrators punished; however, in this regard, the principle of the collective responsibility of the entire population of a given State should not be applied.

The State Duma views as inadmissible attempts to impose on the Security Council decisions on the introduction of sanctions in order to settle accounts with objectionable regimes in various States of the world. As a rule, the use of sanctions does not contribute to the definitive solution of acute international problems, and the use of sanctions imposes suffering, not on the political leadership, but, primarily, on the peaceful population. Considerable economic damage has been caused to many States, including the Russian Federation.

The State Duma considers that the international community and the Security Council must be extremely cautious in considering the taking of decisions on the imposition of sanctions against individual States. The use of this mechanism for exerting pressure must be viewed as an exceptional means which may be utilized only in cases where the political methods of achieving a settlement have been completely exhausted. The existence of a real threat to peace and international security is the paramount criteria for determining the advisability of using coercive measures. In imposing sanctions, the principle of their proportionality to the threat in question must be observed; the conditions and mechanism for their subsequent lifting must be determined; and humanitarian limitations as well as time-limits for the application of sanctions must be established. In this regard, decisions which may aggravate the situation of the civilian population ought to be avoided. There is also a need to develop a set of measures to minimize the economic damage caused to other States in using sanctions. Repeating the mistakes made in imposing the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Iraq and the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is inadmissible.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation decides:

1. To recommend that the President of the Russian Federation should instruct the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to take measures precluding the possibility of the use by the Security Council of sanctions causing serious damage to the economic interests of the Russian Federation, unless at the same time an effective international mechanism is set

up to compensate for economic losses incurred by the Russian side as a result of participation in the sanctions;

2. To recommend that the Government of the Russian Federation should conduct consultations with interested parties on questions relating to the drafting of a convention to combat terrorism;

3. To instruct the State Duma Committee on International Affairs, the State Duma Committee on Security and the State Duma Committee on Legislation and the Judicial and Legal Reform to develop, in coordination with federal executive bodies, a set of measures determining the procedure for participation by the Russian Federation in economic sanctions on the basis of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Charter of the United Nations and also to speed up the elaboration of draft federal laws governing participation by the Russian Federation in measures to combat international terrorism;

4. To instruct the Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to bring the contents of this decision to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the heads of Government of the States that are members of the Security Council.

G. N. SELEZNEV
Chairman of the State Duma of the
Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Moscow, 15 November 1996